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Message Text

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ACTION COME-00

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 EB-08 ISO-00 /017 W
----------030928Z 035535 /10
R 030606Z FEB 77
FM AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5563
INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

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CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EMIN, SF
SUBJECT: US COMPANY INQUIRY RE-MANUFACTUER OF FERROCHROME

REF: A) STATE 019836; B) JOHANNESBURG A-65, AUGUST 18, 1976
C) JOHANNESBURG A-10, JANUARY 31, 1977

1. COMMENT: REF A SUBJECT HEADING STATES THAT US COMPANY INQUIRY PERTAINS TO SOUTH AFRICAN MANUFACTURERS OF FERROCHROME REPEAT FERROCHROME. MAIN BODY OF REF A, HOWEVER, REFERS ONLY TO FERROVANADIUM. WE HAVE ASSUMED THEREFORE THAT INQUIRY IS ON FERROVANADIUM ONLY, AND HAVE RESPONDED ACCORDINGLY (BELOW, AND IN REVISED SUBJECT LINE ABOVE). PLEASE ADVISE IF FERROCHROME INFORMATION IS REQUIRED AS WELL. END COMMENT.

2. CURRENTLY (1976/77), THERE IS ONLY ONE FERROVANADIUM PRODUCER IN SOUTH AFRICA; THE VANTRA DIVISION OF HIGHVELD STEEL AND VANADIUM CORPORATION LIMITED, AT FERROBANK, WITBANK, TRANSVAAL. WHILE VANTRA (HIGHVELD) IS PRINCIPALLY A PRODUCER OF VANADIUM PENTOXIDE (98.0 PERCENT V2 O5) AND 25 PERCENT V2 O5 SLAG, ALIMITED OUTPUT OF FERROVANADIUM
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(78 PERCENT V; TYPICAL) IS PRODUCED ANNUALLY (VIA THE ALUMINA-THERMIC, ELECTRIC FURNACE, ROUTE) FOR IN-HOUSE CONSUMPTION AND LOCAL SALES ONLY. REPORTEDLY, EXPORTS HAVE BEEN INSIGNIFICANT IN RECENT YEARS(AND INDEED NON-EXISTENT AT THE MOMENT). ACCURATE PRODUCTION STATISTICS IN FERROVANADIUM REMAIN UNAVAILABLE, BUT OUR LATEST INQUIRY RECONFIRMS DATA PRESENTED IN REF B

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(PAGE 66) FOR CALENDAR YEARS 1974 AND 1975. SA
MINERALS BUREAU FERROALLOY SPECIALIST V.W.A. DUKE
STATES, FURTHER THAT 1976 OUTPUT BY VANTRA "WOULD
NOT HAVE EXCEEDED THAT OF THE PREVIOUS YEAR".

3. METAL SALES CO (PTY) LTD. (FORMERLY THE
THERMOMETALLURGICAL CORPORATIO OF SA), BENONI,
TRANSVAAL (NEAR JOHANNESBURG) PRODUCED LIMITED QUANTITIES
OF (ALUMINA-THERMIC) FERROVANADIUM UNTIL 1973. LACK
OF DEMAND ON SCALE LARGE ENOUGH TO WARRANT PRODUCTION,
AND ALUMINUM OXIDE PROCUREMENT DIFFICULTIES, FORCED
TERMINATION OF EFFORTS IN THIS DIRECTION. METAL SALES

HOWEVER, REMAINS FULLY EQUIPPED TO REACTIVATE
FERROVANADIUM PRODUCTION ON REQUEST (REPORTEDLY TO
A CAPACITY OF ABOUT 100 TONS ANNUALLY).

4. SAMANCOR (REFS B AND C) WAS EXPECTED TO
ENTER THE FERROVANADIUM FIELD IN 1976, BUT IS NOW
UNDERSTOOD TO BE BEHIND SCHEDULE (GIVEN A GREATER
EMPHASIS ON EXPANSION IN FERROMANGANESE AND FERROCHROME
AT THE PRESENT TIME). UCAR MINERALS CORPORATION
(UNION CARBIDE) IS A PRODUCER OF VANADIUM PENTOXIDE
(98 PERCENT V2 O5) AND VANADIUM CARBIDE (84.0 PERCENT V;
12.5 PERCENT C); THE LATTER UNDER BRAND NAME OF CARVAN.
CARVAN IN SOUTH AFRICA IS NOT REPEAT NOT A FERROVANADIUM
(REF A).

5. WE WILL BE DELIGHTED TO ATTEMPT DEVELOP THIS SUBJECT
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FURTHER, SHOULD ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE BE DESIRED.
JOHNSON

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